Iowa Autism Council

Thursday, October 30, 2008
Facilitator: Mark Wolak/Sue Baker

Present:

Lana Michelson, Barb Rankin, Sue Baker, Mark Wolak, Katherine Byers, Joshua Cobb, Becky Flores(sitting in for Bill Gardam), Keith Gatrost, Becky Harker, Kenda Jochimsen, John Kohles, /Steven Muller, Jim Mumford, Pamela Parker, Grace Percival, Dr. Jeanne Prickett, Danielle Sharpe, Barbara Stineman, Dr. Charles Wadle, Dr. Debra Waldron, Patrick(Casey) Westhoff, Cathy Young Sonia Lewis

Absent: Dr. Ghada Hamdan-Allen

Speakers: None

Welcome/Introduction: Lana Michelson/Mark Wolak

Lana welcomed the panel and introduced herself. She explained that these meetings will be open to the public and, until the council has operating procedures in place, the public will be able to observe and listen, but they will not be able to comment on the meeting. Today will be about understanding our role, responsibilities and work as a council. We need to put operational and governance rules in place in order to accomplish our work.

Lana passed out three handouts regarding open meetings and the law. The panel will want to make some decisions as to when the public can speak at these meetings and how much time they will have to make comments. Thomas Mayes, the department legal consultant will be by later in the day to explain the open meeting law and answer any questions anyone may have about the rules on open meetings. (See handouts)

The department is responsible for convening and providing administrative support for this council. Sonia Lewis is the administrative support person. All e-mails will go through her. If you have something you want to share, send it to Sonia. She will also make sure that we have all materials that we need for each meeting.

Sue Baker will be our future facilitator and will be working with the leadership of this council to make sure that the agenda and other items are in place. Barb Rankin will be Lana's backup when she is unable to attend any of the meetings.

Lana went through the notebook that was put together for the council. Sue Baker put together a draft of the By-Laws. This is one of the things that this council will need to work on. We need to know how we operate and how we make decisions as a council in order to be effective in our work. Please bring your notebook with you to each meeting.

Lana introduced Mark Wolak and explained that the North Central Regional Resource Center (NCRRC) provides technical assistance and services at no cost. Mark will be the facilitator along with Sue Baker (Mark will facilitate for a short period of time).

Overview -Purpose of Legislation and Components: Lana Michelson/Mark Wolak Mark gave a brief bio of himself. Today is an organizing day. It is very important that the rules are very clear. The role of this council is about consultation. Mark asked the council to first write down two short concerns/issues they have as they relate to the law and to introduce themselves and to share the two concerns as they relate to the law. These were organized onto posters which had portions of the law on them during the introductions of each panel member. Ultimately, the council will prioritize their work.

The council will share in collaboration and decision making and not work against each other. Mark suggested reading "Six Secrets of Change" by Michael Fullen. Frame your questions around the issues. All questions are good questions.

Mark presented on the 7 Norms of Collaboration. The members broke out into groups of three and reviewed the norms and added some additional norms such as; put cell phones on vibrate and if you get a call, take it outside in the hall; keep focused on the end in mind/the work we want to get done; keep in mind that we are here to serve the people of the state; need time limit/structure for public comment (five minutes?); special activities (to get public to help); everyone should watch behavior during the meetings so that the council "will not be for naught"; and be present during the meeting (not on PDA).

Mark wants to the council to think about who will speak for the council (one voice). The council will make decisions, but have the chair or someone from the council speak. It will help with team productivity to have one voice to say what our agreement is. This decision should be in the by-laws (who will speak for the council, how decisions are made, etc.).

When making decisions about our work, make sure that we really understand the data. Do research or get the data you need to make the right decision(s). When making decisions based on current data/information, do so knowing that this data/information can and will change. Mark hopes that this council will make some recommendations to improve the systems. The systems run on data, information, and practice. This council has the ability to pull in information from across systems, ask questions, answer big questions and make recommendations.

Lana highlighted parts of the law (in the binder behind tab #4). Section 126 is a <u>new section</u>. The role of the Iowa Autism Council is to act in a an *ADVISORY* capacity to the state in developing and implementing a comprehensive, coordinated system to provide appropriate diagnostic, intervention, and support services for children with autism and to meet the unique needs of adults with autism.

This is a big charge. This is a permanent council with 13 voting members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate. Once your first year term is complete, we will notify the governor's office of this. The governor will sometimes ask if you would like to serve another term or should they look for others to serve. This is a statewide council, so the Governor's office looks for balance across the state.

In addition to the 13 voting members, there are the representatives (ex officio) from the Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Public Health, Department of Human Services, The Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council, the Division of Insurance of the Department of Commerce, and the State Board of Regents.

The ex officio role is to work together in a collaborative manner to serve as a resource to the advisory council. They are the ones who can move things within their agencies in order to bring resources and other data to the council. They will assist the council in getting the work done.

The council can form additional workgroups as necessary to address specific issues. An example is a workgroup to work on a draft of the by-laws and operating procedures. The council will elect a chairperson from the voting members annually. The Department of Education will convene and provide administrative support to the council.

The council will focus its efforts on addressing the unmet needs of individuals with autism at various levels of severity and their families. The council will meet quarterly. The dates are in your binder behind tab 2. A report will be sent to the governor by December 15, 2008. This year we will report that we met and began our work. This council could identify at the meeting in January some legislative issues to present to the legislature.

It's really important how we answer some of the questions. Because you will be working in this sort of big gray area, trying to influence systems and leaders in those systems, it would be good if you had some language about this. We live in a system of Differential Power and Authority. (See handout)

Sometimes when you get on these committees, people think that you have some power. You do have power, but it is really based around influence. It is a personal power. It is not positional power (the typical hierarchical model we have).

Mark shared some questions he has heard and maybe some of you have heard. How do we get things accomplished? You're on an advisory panel. How do you move from inaction to action? In a lot of councils, there is this bias towards inaction. How do you have a bias for action? Why do things take so long?

Mark shared some assumptions with the council which have helped him to help other councils to organize their thinking (i.e. how does government, advisory councils, school boards, and state systems work?). We do operate within very political systems.

Operating Procedures: Lana Michelson/Mark Wolak

The hand of the federal government is stronger; the hand of state government is stronger. The truth is that the legislator could not handle this (autism) so they created a council to deal with it because they couldn't sort it all out while they were trying to figure out what was good legislation. The legislators can't deal with things like mission and ideal future.

They're just dealing with resources. This is a way to look at the differentiated power on a school level. Your council is working across agencies.

You notice that there is no hierarchy here. The power is really differentiated here among a several voices. And the same for this council.

The board and the superintendent have a governance role. The superintendent and principals have a management role. And everybody else is the consulting team. This helps with defining your role. Here is another way to look at this. You have a partnership going on between the legislature, the state departments, parents, students, and citizens.

And you all are trying to align your goals so that you get this increased student learning or adult proficiency depending on which state agency you're with. It is this partnership that is getting more emphasis, because we are realizing that these control models don't work all that well in a system of differentiated power and authority.

What has to happen in a perfect world is government, management and consultation, those three councils efforts have to be done in the greatest alignment possible. You don't want to be out of alignment as a system. You want to be in alignment. And the better you are at using data, the more likely you are to be in alignment across the system.

Policy and governance might ask what questions do we have and what does the data/information tell us? Do we see community values reflected in how our resources are allocated? We spend our money no matter where we are, family, organizations, and government based on our values.

How could scarce resource be used more wisely for children and citizens? Because you see the underbelly of the system. You're a consumer and you're seeing what isn't working. So you're more likely to raise those questions, but tie it to the policy level question around values. We do spend our money in our systems based on our values.

There used to be this notion that it was based on our beliefs. Mark thinks that values are stronger. We can have a lot of beliefs but the values are what drives us in terms of our personal decision making. What experiences do we share? How might we influence policy thought these shared experiences?

Mark wants the council to think about change and the wonderful opportunity they have a voice for change in multiple systems, but the state system in general. In organizations, people tend to solve their problems at the same level or one down instead of one level up.

A typical conversation in a council of people meeting about state services usually is going to be around resources. So Bob Terry's model would suggest that if you have a resource problem you solve it by changing structure. If you have a structure problem you solve it at structure or move up to mission or power of authority. And if you have a power problem you solve it by going up to purpose. What's your shared mission?

You know that there is going to be a shortage of resources in this state so you will need to shift your conversation to structure and if you need help getting that solved, you move it up to positions of authority and if you need to move it up from there, you talk about mission. This is why it doesn't work for the legislature to talk about mission.

As a council of consultants to the system, it really would be wise if you could frame your questions around your issues. We will do this in future meetings. All questions are good questions, so you can feel like you can ask anything about why we do things the way we do. Looking at the collaboration piece again, collaboration works when people in the council understand the limits of their authority.

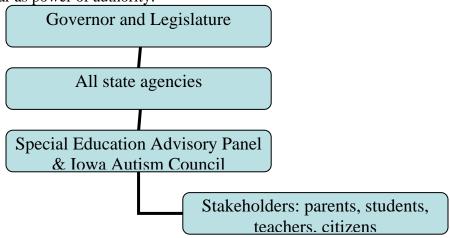
You can not act outside of that. You really do need to influence people in management, people that are governing, and policy. You can do that best by asking questions, getting data and formulating your recommendations based on what you have learned about the systems. Your role is a role of influence, to provide feedback, insights, concerns, and active engagement.

Josh is very interested in seeing how the whole process will work. And wants to see the plan of action or implementation planning.

Cathy stated that the collaboration is so important, laying the ground work and coming together so that we all might not forget our highest priority, so that all of us feel that our voices were heard at the table. If we're mission focused and committed to collaboration she thinks we will do extremely well.

Chuck asked; as an advisory council does that somehow empower us a little more than the norm? If they're (legislature) at a quandary as to what to do. What we bring to the table, are we more likely to ask them?

Mark showed an organization chart (he will put together another one) to illustrate where the council is as far as power of authority.



This is a tremendous responsibility. Get something accomplished and put some resources into this whole development of a plan. Mark has high hopes for the council. The council

is a voice of influence, a consultative council, and how well all of your voices are heard will make a difference in what you get accomplished.

Grace said that she agrees and feels that the council has a lot of influence. Because the legislature is asking for the advisory council to give some direction. When she heard about the council after working in this field for a long time, she was really excited because this was our time. We have a really good chance to really influence the legislature.

Lana gave an example of how this has worked with other councils. Pamela and she worked on a governor appointed council for Birth to Three (3) services. They collaborated with Childhood Specialty Clinics, Department of Public Health, Department of Human Services, and the Department of Education. For the first time ever, we were able to get state dollars for birth to three services when there had never been state dollars before.

That council didn't have any more authority than this one. But what that council did was that they were really driven by that cause and everyone stayed focused on the one voice and really went after that key legislative issue. Because of that they will be able to get other things as they move down the road. It was really being able to get focused, and here is where our first strike is.

If we all stay focused on this first strike, then we will get strike two, strike three, etc. the danger would be, if we go in too broad with a laundry list of 40 to 50 items and not with a focused effort of what is the most important thing that we need right now.

Mark stated that the council wants to do a few things well for many, this is the mission. The council does not want to do many things for many people. In looking at the board you have already set some priorities by what your individual interests are. By the next meeting you could probably sort that out. Financing options including but not limited to medical assistance waivers and private health insurance coverage as one of your primary concerns.

Grace stated that in the council that she was in they discussed how this is a "how/process thing", in looking at some items on the board. Some of them could be collapsed down since they overlap into other areas. It really depends on the words that the council uses.

We don't want to lose sight of what we set a little while ago, that this is a body that's really when you look at those agencies (governor, leadership); we do have people here that make decisions on policy and resource allocation within their department/bureau. It influences decisions that I make as we move forward.

Mark stated that partnerships are about relationships. The legislature wants to know what the council thinks. They want to know what other states are doing, how it's working in other states. Since this is a legislative mandate by virtue of having other agencies that

would ultimately be involved in hands on in service, that might be influenced before any legislative action.

Kenda commented that it could also be using our resources more effectively since we have finite resources. The other thing as agencies is that we say "how we can minimize duplication and maximize our resources?" sometimes that's through coordination. We have things that we've done with DHS where they pick up a portion and we'll pick up the rest. Those kinds of things do happen and they happen as a result of these kinds of councils.

The fact that you are not in a command and control position does not diminish the amount of influence and power that you have. This is just about clarifying your role. You're not in a government role or a management role you're in an advisor role. No one is bound by the recommendations you make, because it's not within your authority (you can't make decisions outside your level of authority and accountability).

You can influence greatly. We are all about these systems of Differentiated Power and Authority that is a part of our culture and we getting better at it. Mark recommended a book titled *The Wisdom of Crowds*. The research on the wisdom of crowds is explained and the argument is "a large council of people when given the right information and a process for making decisions will make better decisions over time than a small council of people".

Now that has lessons for all of us in that this is what this council is all about. You're about trying to be the voice for a large council of people in an organized, planful, constructive way.

Chuck wanted to know if the chair would be the voice of the council (internal/external). Lana stated that if someone called her about the council, she would refer them to the chair. The Department of Education's role is to make sure that council has administrative support and Lana will make sure that that is done. The ex officio's job is to be a resource to the 13 members of the council.

It just seems that it would be important to be educated before the council moves forward. Mark suggested a data collection. There was a comment that the council would need data not only on autism and the latest or best research on autism, we need to understand better the inner workings of the state departments that the ex officios represent.

Mark stated that the 13 council members should help define "what are your needs." This will help to line up the priorities/concerns/issues that will be raised about the work. The council would like to have general information about each agency and it role in autism and to identify what is currently being provided in a-i of the law if it exists.

Data collection-how many people in the state of Iowa have autism? There is no single entity that is capturing those numbers. Another entity may be randomly capturing numbers, whether it be an agency, insurer, etc. are they tracking it, how are they tracking

it? The council would like to have the incidence rate by geography, by services currently provided. The council would also like to have information on other state models (what is their legislation, services, etc.).

The council wants to know about private insurance in the state of Iowa, how they're regulated (what do they cover/not cover for autism) what standards and services they provide and coupled with the state and federal funded dollars and agencies, how much of that is allocated toward autism services?

Lana stated that there is a difference between state and federal funded dollars and that the rules for both are different.

The voting members broke into small councils to see who would like to run for chair and co-chair. The council elected Josh Cobbs as the chair and Danielle Sharpe as the co-chair. The role of the chair and co-chair will be to get the agenda planned for each meeting with the Department of Education staff, be the voice for the council, running the meeting, work with the facilitator (Sue and Mark), discuss what do we want to get accomplished at the next meeting, how are we going to get it done, call the meeting to order, approve the minutes, and convene the meeting.

Wrap up:

The volunteers for the by-laws committee are Josh Cobbs, Keith Gatrost, and Becky Harker. Grace asked what other items the council should be looking at between now and the next meeting. She feels that the council needs to be educated about how autism is currently handled or not handled now within the state so that we can identify strengths and other areas of need.

Each ex officio will prepare a brief summary of what services they provide for Autism (bulleted summary). The council would like to have this information before the next meeting. Or have one workgroup put together a list of questions pertaining to a-i of the law and send it to each of the ex officios to complete prior to the next meeting.

The executive committee (Josh, Danielle, Lana, Mark and Sue) will have a phone conference call on December 3rd at 10:00 am to discuss the agenda for January. Sonia will schedule the conference call.

According to Thomas Mayes (bureau legal consultant), you can have conference calls within your workgroup as long as the workgroup does not represent a quorum.

Next Meeting:

January 7, 2009 Stoney Creek Inn Johnston IA